

HONDURAS/
NICARAGUA

BROKAW: United States has had a close military relationship with Honduras for many years, but now that may be changing. A top Honduran army officer said today that a 30-year-old military pact is being reviewed. At the same time Honduras is cracking down on the contras, the U.S.-backed rebels who use Honduras as a base for their attacks on Nicaragua. Mike Boettcher reports tonight that this action may be aimed at the United States as well.

BOETTCHER: The CIA-supported, anti-Nicaraguan guerrillas burned everything they couldn't carry from their hospital near Tegucigalpa. They had to leave in a hurry, the Honduran military had ordered the hospital closed. Up until last Friday, the hospital looked like this, filled with rebels who were wounded inside Nicaragua and evacuated to Honduras for treatment here. For two years, the Honduran government said the rebels were not in their country. But Congress has denied further aid for the rebels, and Honduras is now worried it will be stuck with 12,000 disgruntled armed combatants.

BOETTCHER: Diplomatic sources in Honduras say by closing the hospital and a few other rebel bases, Honduras is sending a message to Washington that it wants more economic and military aid and more influence over U.S. operations in Honduras.

BOETTCHER: Honduran officials say U.S. military maneuvers here have left this bankrupt country deeper in debt. They also believe Honduras doesn't have enough control over CIA-funded, anti-Nicaraguan guerrillas here. Rebels say they have already moved some of their operations from Honduras to Nicaragua. But the rebel command center is still inside Honduras at this border guerrilla base called Los Vegas. Honduras apparently doesn't want the CIA-supported rebels completely kicked out of Honduras, but Honduras is pushing the Reagan administration. It is saying if it is to remain America's aircraft carrier in Central America, as Hondurans joke it is, then Honduras wants more consideration and more dollars. Mike Boettcher, NBC News, Tegucigalpa.